



"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST"

December 25

"For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."
—Luke 2:11.

GODS promise that the Seed of Abraham should ultimately bless all nations has influenced thought the world over, but particularly amongst those nations living contiguous to Abraham's home and northward and westward from there, in the directions in which the message of Divine favor has gone. At first the Jews thought of this promise as being fulfilled in them as a nation—that, with out assistance from on High, they could approve themselves to God through obedience to the Law Covenant, and that then, as instructors of the world, they would teach all nations to keep that Divine Law, and thus bring the world to the blessed state of perfection, Divine favor and life everlasting. This hope was crushed out as they found themselves unable to keep



the Law, going down into death, instead of attaining to perfection of life. Even Moses, the special servant of God, could not, and did not, attain the blessing of the Law.

Then God made them the promise of some better thing—a greater Mediator and of a more successful Covenant through that Mediator. The Mediator of the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34) was to be greater than Moses; as he himself declared, "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from amongst your brethren like unto me (but greater)—him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. And it shall come to pass that the soul that will not obey that Prophet shall be destroyed from amongst the people." (Acts 3:22, 23.)

"The Desire of All Nations"

As surrounding nations and those afar off heard of Israel's hopes—that to them would come a great Savior, Deliverer, who would bless them and exalt them in the world and through them bless all peoples, the beauty of the thought took root in every direction. Messiah was more or less looked for under various names, and the glories of his Kingdom were pictured by heathen poets as the Golden Age.

Thus it happened that when our Lord was born, when he was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, "All men were in expectation of him"—not of Jesus, but of the promised Messiah, whom Jesus was. Thus it was that wise men in the East were attracted to see and to worship him that was born King of the Jews. Thus it was also that during Jesus' ministry certain Greeks came to the disciples saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." They had heard of him and recognized that in some respects his magic power implied a relationship with the long-expected Messiah. And so it was with the multitudes of Palestine. They heard; they listened. They said, Is this he? The rulers said, No, this is not the Messiah. Then the people asked, When Messiah cometh can he do greater works than this man? Never man spake like this man!

Nevertheless, there were few ready to receive him, even amongst his own—only "Israelites indeed," to whom, because of worthiness of heart, God specially revealed his Son. This was in harmony with the prophecy of old, "The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence him; he will show them his Covenant." (Psa. 25:14.) As again it is written, "I will give him for a Covenant of the people." (Isa. 49:8.) Neither Jews nor Greeks nor Persians wise men knew to expect that Messiah would first appear to offer himself, through obedience to the Truth, a living sacrifice for sinners. None of them knew that a long period must elapse from the time when Messiah would be the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, of whom the people would be ashamed, until he would appear in power and great glory to establish his Empire under the whole heavens, in fulfillment of the prophetic picture of Daniel 2:34; 7:13, 14-27.

Few understand God's great secret or "mystery"—hidden during past ages and dispensations (Col. 1:26), that, during this long period of the Gospel Age, a saintly "little flock" would be selected from amongst men to be Messiah's Bride, and joint-heir with him in his Messianic reign. Few see that this

"little flock" has been selected during these nineteen centuries from every nation, people, kindred and tongue, and that they are all saints, in the spirit of their minds, at least, and follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth, walking in the footsteps of Jesus. Few understand that, as soon as these joint-sacrificers with the Master shall have filled up the measure of afflictions appointed, then the Kingdom of glory will be revealed and all flesh shall see it together and all shall be blessed by it.

A Savior—Christ the Lord

It was prophetically, of course, that the Babe of Bethlehem was called a Savior—he was to be a Savior, The Christ, the Lord. But as the Babe he was none of these. He became The Christ before becoming the Savior and Lord. The word Christ signifies anointed. In the Divine purpose it was arranged that Messiah should be anointed High Priest of Israel on a higher plane than Aaron—after the order of Melchisedec. (Psalm 110:4.) And every priest must be anointed to his office before he could fill it. Similarly, it was prophesied that Christ would be the great King, greater than David and Solomon, who were his types and foreshadows.

The anointing of Jesus was not with literal oil, but with that which the oil upon the head of the kings and priests of Israel typified—the holy Spirit. He received this holy Spirit at the time of his baptism, the Spirit falling upon him and abiding with him, anointing him for his great work of antitypical Priest and antitypical King of Israel, who, as the Messiah long-promised, would bless them, and through them, the world. But every priest was ordained to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins, and in this also they typified Jesus, who, under the Divine arrangement, must first offer up himself as a sacrifice acceptable to God for the sin of mankind—in order that he might be the Savior or Deliverer of men from the curse of sin and death—that he might restore them and their earthly home to the glorious condition of perfection represented in Adam and his Eden home. Hence it was necessary that Jesus should not only consecrate his life to the Divine service and be anointed with the holy Spirit, but that, sacrificially, he should lay down his life, even unto death—even the death of the cross. As a part of his reward he was raised to glory, honor and immortality, on the third day thereafter.

As the glorified One he was now fully commissioned and empowered to establish the long-promised Messianic Kingdom, but has been waiting while a "little flock" have walked in his footsteps—until the elect number shall be completed and shall share his glory. Then his Kingdom will take the control of earth. Satan shall be bound for a thousand years and all the wonderful blessings promised in the Law and the Prophets and Gospels and Epistles shall be fulfilled.

"A Savior and a Great One"

We have seen how the Son of God attained his Priestly Office, for the sacrifice of himself; how he was anointed thereto, and also anointed to be the great King, and how he has been merely waiting for the due time for his Kingdom to begin. Now we inquire as to the force and significance of the word Savior, and how he saves his people from their sin.

In the Arabic, Savior signifies life-giver. The Redeemer, glorified as the antitypical Melchisedec, "a priest upon his throne," is to be the Savior or life-giver of the race, for whose sin and because of whose condemnation he



died—"the just for the unjust, to bring us back to God," some during this Age and some during the period of his Messianic reign. Gradually he, with his saintly Bride class, will uplift humanity from sin and death to righteousness and life eternal and will destroy all who refuse the blessing in the Second Death, from which there will be no hope of recovery.

But the Christ, the Savior of Glory, Bride and Bridegroom, will, unitedly, be the world's Savior. The glorified Redeemer saves his Church first—by a special salvation and High Calling. These are the "elect," called to suffer with him and, if faithful, to reign with him on the Heavenly plane. These are dealt with now on the basis of faith; they pass from death into life by the exercise of faith and their entering into a Covenant with God, of sacrifice, through the merit of the Redeemer. Their salvation will be made actual when they shall share in his resurrection, the "First Resurrection," and become kings and priests unto God, to reign with Christ a thousand years.—Rev. 20:4.

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Thoughts on Christmas.

The time draws near—the birth of Jesus, the Christ. Over the world comes a change, momentary but wonderful. For one day the principal motives of human effort cease to act and give way to their opposites, replaces jealousy and hate; brotherhood replaces competition. Rivalry in acquisition yields to rivalry in giving. For one day in the year the conduct of the Christian world conforms not merely in hollow pretense, but in reality to the precepts of Jesus. There is on earth, if not peace, at least the willingness to cease from strife, and if one day is a little too brief to perfect the feeling and practice of good will toward men, still, considering how great the change is from ordinary habits, we contrive a fair imitation of it. Considering, too, that the Christmas spirit is expected to last for one day only, the world shows, it must be admitted, great respect to the Galilean shepherd by taking so much pains to give an air of verisimilitude to its brief submission to this rule. For one whole day in the year we are Christians in deed as well as name.

The brotherhood of man is the most fertile of all truths. Whatever is good in modern civilization comes from accepting it; whatever is bad, by denying it. Democracy is the teaching of Jesus expressed in government, but thus far the expression has been timid, tentative and inadequate. Inventions will make it possible to express his teachings in industry and commerce. Some wholesale softening of the heart will make us apply his teaching in conduct. There are psychic waves now permeating the world which seem to indicate that some such transformation of civilization may not be far away. Perhaps the kingdom of heaven is nearer than we think with brotherly love for its constitution and justice to all men for its practice. Then Gethsemane and the crown of thorns will become symbols not of tragic failure, but of triumph, and the Christmas spirit will be the spirit of every day in the year.

A right round merry Christmas.

Joy be with you, peace and good will.

A happy home, health and happiness be thine.

In this world not only well wishing but well doing is a colossal virtue.

The life we live gives value to our words and wishes, and so, dear reader, we hope your kindly wishes and cheery greetings may be golden.

Christmas, the home day, the Christ day! May its lessons and its blessings gladden all hearts and make a truth of the common salvation, "A Merry Christmas to you."

"Peace on earth, good will toward men," the grandest of all carols, dearest of all angel hymns—time has destroyed none of its sweetness and has preserved all of its promise.

May love and joy cross the threshold of every home, peace cov-

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er the dear ones as a mantle, and gladness so abundant, sad memories for a moment may be forgotten.

The one great and essential fact about Christmas is this: that it is the celebration of a birthday. Hence, we will do well to have in remembrance Him for Whom the day is named and in Whose honor it is appointed to be kept. And, having in mind the shepherds and the stable, we will remember how His life, begun in simplicity, was lived to the end of it in accordance with this beginning.

It is far more important that parents realize that this pagan error of the ascendancy of Santa Claus should not mislead our children on Christmas Day. In whatever way we may choose to celebrate the day let us somewhere, at the very beginning—before breakfast, at breakfast or directly after breakfast—keep a brief space wherein some one may read alone the second chapters of Saint Matthew and Saint Luke, closing with the singing of an old Christmas carol, old words to old music in the old way. Then, if you please, let Santa Claus come into the day, but let us remember well what the original Santa Claus, the good Saint Nicholas of Myra, stood for. He showed himself a Saint and earned the reputation which has been his through generations by one dominant characteristic: relieving the necessities of a poor family. He went around very quietly, when nobody was looking, and put things in through the window. Thus he has right to be a modest place in our festivities. Let us follow his example. Let us do that sort of cheerful thing. Let us think of one or two, or more according to our means, to whom we may bring in a quiet, friendly way an added pleasure, with whom we may somehow share the overflowing happiness which fills our fortunate days. And this we will do in the name of Him whose anniversary we keep, remembering His own poverty, and how He went about doing good, and how He told us that we ought to love others even as He loved us.

Think of Him, who was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, and without home; yet from His presence an ocean of consolation has spread and covered the earth with its waters of healing.

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